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THE OTHER FOOT



NATALIE and Roberta held a meeting in the big, cool living room of the log cabin in the mountains. "With all love and respect for mother," Roberta declared feelingly, "it seems to me unreasonable that she should be so anxious over a little thing like a horseback ride. What are we here for, if not to have a good time?"

Fred Allison looked from the wide windows, where the mountains towered into the blue. "That's true," he admitted. "Still, these mountains *are* steep, and we *do* ride pretty recklessly sometimes."

"Oh, it isn't the mountains she's most afraid of," pointed out their cousin, Natalie Ayres. "It's the horses. Or maybe both. Aunt Nella's always afraid the horses are wild or the mountains dangerous. Mother's as bad. When she and I came here to spend the summer with you I begged her not to worry over my safety or she'd spoil my visit. Poor mother! She simply couldn't!"

Fred looked thoughtful. "I don't know but what mother and Aunt Emma have a good deal on their side," he reminded them. "Remember, they sit here at home and wait and wonder what might have happened when we do foolish or inconsiderate things, while we have no anxiety at all, being there to see that nothing *has* happened."

"But that's just what they shouldn't do," affirmed Roberta. "Why not take it for granted that everything is all right, as long as they do not know that anything is wrong?"

"Easier said than done, I suppose," said the sober-minded Fred, "when you are the careful mother of—well, thoughtless children."

Roberta flung him a look of scorn. "Oh, you're always on their side, Fred. But didn't you stay on the lake until after dark and have them all out searching for you with lanterns and things?"

Fred regarded her gravely. "Yes, I did," he acknowledged, "and I'll never be guilty of it again. I'll never forget the look of joy on my mother's face when she saw me and realized that I was not drowned. I resolved then that, if I was worth that much to her, her peace of mind should be worth something to me."

"All very pretty talk, Frederick," Natalie said tartly, "but all the same you like to ride and row

and motor as well as any of us. I don't see *you* giving up any of it."

"Mother doesn't ask us to do that; she only asks us to be careful. You take to a fiery horse like a duck to water, Nat, and Bobs has been trailing in your wake this summer. She's sort of reckless at best, and needs to be held down rather than encouraged. Look at that ride you girls took up Eagle Pass, and were gone almost the entire day, when you told mother you'd get back by noon. She and Aunt Emma had a right to be frightened, especially when they found you'd chosen the two most spirited horses on the mountain. And I tell you I went mighty willingly when they sent me in search of you."

Natalie laughed. "Well, and I'll tell you that you were mighty unwelcome. It spoils every bit of the fun if you've got to be watched and tended like the lost lamb. I've almost decided to give up and go home if mother doesn't get better."

Roberta and Natalie linked arms and walked scornfully out to the porch; and Fred, who was unaware that they'd been sitting there, saw his mother and Mrs. Ayres rise quickly and come inside.

About noon Aunt Emma's little car arrived from home, and she was all eagerness to try it over the mountain roads. "Of course you girls and Fred have engagements," she assumed, "so Nella and I will go for a ride."

"On the contrary, we've decided to remain at home," said Natalie; "but go ahead, mother, and I hope you'll have a good time." Directly after luncheon the little car pulled smoothly out, and the mothers waved a gay good-bye to the young people. Time wore on, and shadows were beginning to lengthen when Roberta looked up. "I didn't know they expected to stay so long," she said hesitantly.

Probably the same thought was in Natalie's mind, as it evoked a quick answer. "It isn't like mother. She usually stays only a little while."

Fred glanced over his book. "They usually don't go out at all. Do try to let them enjoy it without worrying."

The girls ignored him. For a time the knitting needles flew and bright jumpers grew beneath their busy fingers. Then slower and slower they moved,

until Roberta's work dropped in her lap. "I can't understand their staying so long. Do you suppose——"

"Of course not," Natalie cut in with a nervous laugh.

Roberta watched the shadows deepen about the cabin. Her cheeks paled a little. Then she roused herself with an effort, forcing an unnatural sprightliness into her manner. "I think I'll go and begin supper. Surely they'll be here by the time it's ready."

"And as hungry as wolves," added Natalie, springing up, and was instantly sorry she had reminded herself of anything so alarming as wolves. A shadow stirred outside the cabin. "Fred," she blurted, "did you—are you—I mean did you ever hear of any wild animals in these mountains?"

Fred showed a solemn face, scarcely visible now over the top of his book. "Nothing wilder than the horses you ride, Nat. Don't worry."



She turned on her heel and left him, to help Roberta with supper. When the girls came out on the porch again Roberta could stand it no longer. "Fred," she said, "I'm—I'm frightened. Do you suppose anything could have happened to them?"

"Why, certainly not," Fred assured her calmly. "They're just having a good time."

Patience broke all bounds. "But I'm so worried!" she cried miserably. "Mother would never stay out past supper time."

Natalie suppressed a sob. "And—and mother isn't used to driving over mountain roads. If something hasn't happened I can't understand how she can be so careless and subject me to such anxiety."

Fred did not remind them that, in their own opinion, worry or anxiety was merely a state of mind, to be controlled at will. "Let's go in and eat supper," he suggested.

Natalie gave him a horrified glance. "I shouldn't think you'd wish to be flippant about it, Fred," she rebuked.

"Or to eat, while they may be——" At the thought of tragedy Roberta covered her face with her hands. "A single mouthful would choke me!"

Natalie jumped up. "Get the lanterns, Fred. I can't stand the suspense any longer. We must search for them."

"We couldn't get very far," reminded Fred. "The roads are too dark. Suppose we wait a while longer."

"No!" almost screamed Roberta. "Natalie is right! We must search! I don't understand how you, a man, can hold back so."

"Oh, all right," shrugged Fred. "I'll get the lanterns."

They walked single file along the road over which the motorists had started, the lanterns bobbing in their hands. They reached a place where the road branched in three directions and stopped. "Let each go a little way up one of the roads," suggested Natalie, "and halloo now and then to each other."

Fred didn't think much of the plan, being afraid they would miss their way in the darkness, but again he yielded. But the shadows grew so dense they could not see, even with the lanterns, and they were forced to turn back. Silent and frightened they approached the cabin and saw the two old women calmly rocking on the front porch.

Each overwrought girl flew to the shelter of her own mother's arms. "Oh, mother, mother," sobbed Roberta, "how could you make me so miserable!"

"Why, Bobs," protested Mrs. Allison, "it was only a few hours longer than you expected us to stay. I should think you would understand that."

Roberta glanced up suspiciously. "You mean that we——"

"Have done the same thing often. Out on the lake, up the side of those terrible mountains, on horseback——"

"While you—while you and Aunt Emma sat at home and waited—and suffered— O mother!"

Her mother's arms folded about her soothingly. "The shoe was on the other foot this time, wasn't it, daughter? And it was you who felt the pinch," she said gently.

The two women looked across the bowed heads of Natalie and Bobs and smiled, but it was long after midnight before they told them what Fred had known all along—that they had sat in the car up a mountain road near the house for two hours before they decided to come home.

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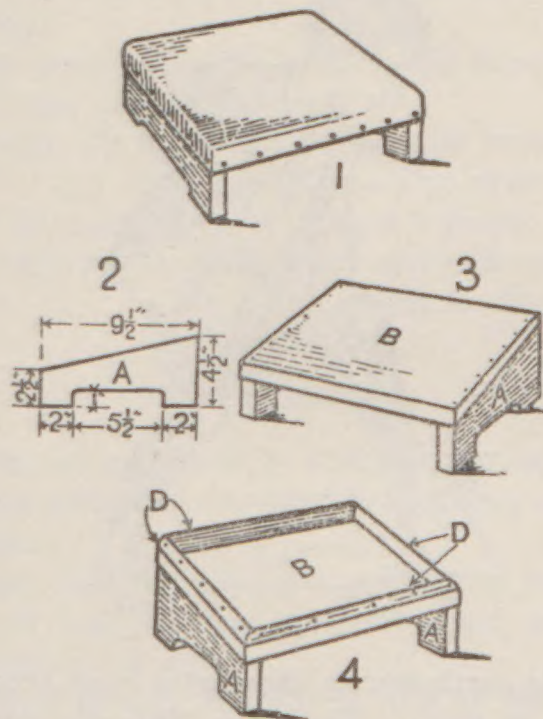
HOBBIES AND WRINKLES



A Home-made Footstool.

For Boys.

THE footstool in Fig. 1 will be appreciated by every lover of a good book and an easy chair. First prepare end pieces A by the pattern of Fig. 2, then top board B. The length of B should be fourteen or sixteen inches; the width will be governed by the length of pieces A. Nail top B to pieces A, then cut brace C (Fig. 3) and fasten it between runners A. To the edges of top B nail strips D (Fig. 4). Round



the top edges as shown. Pad the top, and stretch a piece of cloth and tack it to the edges of top B. Cover the cloth with imitation leather and fasten the edges with upholstering tacks.

Bazaar Doll.

For Girls.

If any of you wish to make a useful and amusing thing for a bazaar, and one which sells well, try a bazaar doll. Here she is. Her name is Miss Kitty Kitchen. You will need:—

- 1 plain wooden spoon about 14 inches long.
- 1 dish-mop.
- 1 tea or glass cloth.
- A coloured duster.
- A dish-cloth.
- 1 yard of any ribbon.

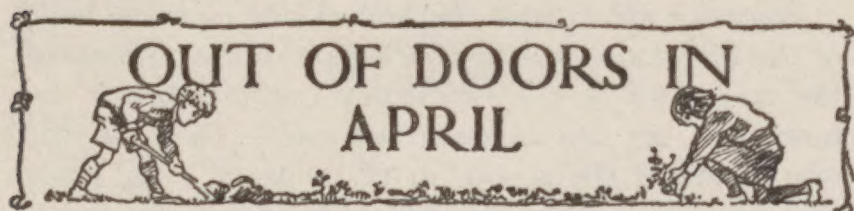
Place the spoon with the hollow side over the head of the dish-mop, pushing back part of the threads of the mop, and tie the two firmly together below the bowl, and tie also at the other end. Then, on the round side of the spoon, mark in pencil eyes, nose, mouth. Pin or sew the tea-cloth round the spoon and mop to form a frock. Over this put the duster



to form an apron, and place the dish-cloth round the neck for a shawl. Then write on a card:—

"You stir your porridge with my face,
And with my apron dust the place,
Wash up the dishes with my shawl,
'Tis strongly made and not too small.
My skirt, you see, is not a hobble,
'Twill dry your glass without much trouble;
But if you want a mop instead,
You'll find one in my wooden head;
Although my hair has turned quite white,
I'll work for you both day and night."

Suspend this from the doll's neck by the ribbon, using one half of it for this purpose, and tie the other piece round the neck of Miss Kitty, finishing it with a nice bow. The selling price will be judged from the cost of the things used, adding a little for the trouble of making it, and for the good of the cause.



WINTER is over and we hope the snow has gone. The buds are coming out on the trees, little lambs are in the fields, and daisies are peeping up from the grass. It is springtime, the glad time of the year. After the long winter rest the insects and birds are full of life and strength. Over the water of the brook are crowds of tiny flies. They have just come out of the water, for they have slept all winter at the bottom of the brook. In the autumn they were little water-grubs; they went to sleep, and in their winter sleep changed into flies. Each fly was in a little case. Now they have burst through their cases and are flying about.

The young leaves of the trees are very pretty, they are so small and of such a delicate green colour. Many of the birds leave us every year when winter comes and fly across the sea to warmer lands, but they return in the spring, build their nests and rear their young ones.

This is the time to be busy with our gardens. The garden is the place where we can always be happy and busy like the birds, butterflies, and bees.

Whatever the size of your garden is to be, you will require some tools to work with.

The most important of these are a spade, a rake, and a watering-can. With these you can do everything that is necessary; but you will find it very useful to have others—a trowel, a hoe, a fork, and a little wheelbarrow.

When buying your tools you should choose good, strong ones, which will not break after a few weeks of use; and although they should not be "toy tools," they must not be too heavy for you, or your arms will soon grow tired.

And now, having got your tools, let us consider how we are to begin the garden.

If you have been given a part of a border or bed to be your own bit of ground, you should mark off a little path round it, so that you can reach each corner of it without treading on the flowers outside your own little garden.

You should not ask for more ground than perhaps nine square yards to begin with; and if this is more than can be spared for you, a smaller space will do.

Before you begin to put in plants, you must get the ground ready for them, and this must be done by digging. If the soil is stiff, you will find a fork easier to work with than a spade.

Begin at the top of the bed. Push the fork well into the ground with your foot, and raise as much soil as you can lift, shaking the earth through the prongs. Take out all the roots and stones, and be careful to break up all the lumps.

When you have dug the ground over with your fork, you should next take your spade; for in digging we want not only to break up the soil, but to turn it over. This is a very important part of the work. Flowers require air to make them grow, and their roots find much more nourishment in soil which has been open to the air than they do in earth which has been hidden below the surface for a long time.

We must therefore turn the earth right over, so that what has been on the surface shall go below to feed the roots of the plants.



The little earth-worms show us a good example of this kind of work. They are Nature's own little gardeners. Every worm spends its life in carrying earth from below and leaving it on the surface. They manure the ground as well, for they carry leaves down into their burrows, and these leaves decay and gradually enrich the ground.

If there is much clay in the soil we should follow the example of the worms in this too, and as we dig we should put in plenty of leaf-mould or sand. There will be no difficulty in getting these if we live in the country. Leaf-mould can be found in any wood, and you will probably be able to find sand on the banks of some stream.

If possible, you should ask a gardener to look at your bed, and he will tell you if the soil is poor and will require manure or lime to be put in. But the way you dig your garden is more important than what you put into it, and you must spare no trouble in learning to do this properly.

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O H! to be in England
Now that April's there,
And whoever wakes in England
Sees, some morning, unaware,
That the lowest boughs and the brushwood sheaf
Round the elm-tree bole are in tiny leaf,
While the chaffinch sings on the orchard bough
In England—now!
And after April, when May follows,
And the whitethroat builds, and all the swallows—
Hark! where my blossomed pear-tree in the hedge
Leans to the field and scatters on the clover
Blossoms and dew-drops—at the bent spray's edge—
That's the wise thrush; he sings each song twice
over,
Lest you should think he never could recapture
The first fine careless rapture!
And though the fields look rough with hoary dew,
All will be gay when noon-tide wakes anew
The buttercups, the little children's dower,
—Far brighter than this gaudy melon-flower.

ROBERT BROWNING.

Wishes.

L AID in my quiet bed, in study as I were,
I saw within my troubled head a heap of thoughts
appear,
And every thought did show so lively in mine eyes,
That now I sighed, and then I smiled, as cause of
thoughts did rise.
I saw the little boy, in thought how oft that he
Did wish of God, to 'scape the rod, a tall young man
to be;
The young man eke that feels his bones with pain
opprest,
How he would be a rich old man, to live and lie at rest!
The rich old man, that sees his end draw on so sore,
How would he be a boy again to live so much the more.
Whereat full oft I smiled to see how all those three,
From boy to man, from man to boy, would chop and
change degree.

EARL OF SURREY.

Speak Well.

TWO boys, Donald and Harry, applied for the same situation. Both had good characters, both were good workers, and it was hard to choose between them. Harry was the lucky one, and Donald went home disappointed. A friend asked Harry's master why the boy was chosen. He replied, "Because, though both boys were pretty equal, Harry spoke so much more clearly and correctly than Donald."

Now there are many words in our language which seem to be pronounced wrongly by numbers of people. Let us try to find out how to avoid this.

February.—There is an "r" in this word after the "b," and it is often left out both in speaking and writing it. To say "Febuary" is wrong.

Library.—Here, too, the "r" follows "b," and is constantly left out. This is not an easy word to say, but all the letters must be sounded.

Arctic and Antarctic.—These two words, for some reason or other, often have the first "c" left out, though it is just as important as the second one, and must not be overlooked.

Absurd.—Many people say this word as if the "s" were a "z." It is pronounced just as it is spelt, giving the sound of "s."

Chimney.—Few words are so badly used as this one. Yet it is quite a simple one. Don't say "chimley" or "chimbley"—just say it as it is spelt, and remember the "n."

Drought is said like this—"drowt." It means a dryness.

Piano is an easy word if you only remember that it ends in "o," and sound that very important letter.

Mischievous.—The letter "e" is not sounded in this word. Say it as if the "e" were left out, and put most stress on the first syllable, thus—"mis'-chivous."

Recognize.—Sound the "g" in this word: "rec-og-nize."

Exaggerate.—Sound the "gg" as if it were "adge," thus—"exadgerate."

Excellent.—Sound the "x" as you do in naming the letter. Do not say "eggcellent," but "excellent."



Jean-François Millet.

AMONG the great geniuses of the world we would write in golden letters the name of Jean-François Millet, adding, still with the golden pencil, the words "peasant and painter."

All know the painter from his wonderful pictures, almost every child has seen at least a copy of his "Gleaners" or "The Angelus," but the peasant is not so well known, and the story of his childhood is the key to much of the beauty which lies hidden in the great painter's work.

Listen then to the story of the childhood of Jean-François Millet, peasant and painter.

On the coast of Normandy, high up on one of those frowning granite cliffs which overhang the sea, the little town of Gruchy is perched like a sea-bird's nest among the grey rocks.

In one of the strongly-built, well-thatched houses of the little town there lived, about a hundred years ago, a peasant farmer called Jean-Louis Millet. Like his father and grandfather before him, he worked in the fields all day and returned at night to the same comfortable old house which was large enough to shelter the three generations which now gathered under its roof. There was the grandmother, who looked after the household and took care of the children, there was Jean-Louis himself, his wife and eight children.

There was another inmate of the old house who had a special love for the boy, and that was his great-uncle the Abbé Charles Millet, a priest who suffered much persecution at the time of the Revolution, but who was now the parish priest of Gruchy.

There was one day which François never forgot. He had wandered away from his uncle and had climbed down to the sea-shore, and was enjoying all the delights of fishing for tadpoles when he heard his name called and saw his great-uncle furiously waving to him from the cliff. He obeyed the call at once and climbed up; but the old man had been badly frightened, and as soon as he had the child safe and sound by his side again, his anxiety suddenly turned to anger. He took off his large three-cornered hat and beat François with it soundly and then drove him up to the house, still beating him with the hat as he went.

"Ah! I'll help thee to get home," he cried with each flapping whack, and as François's legs were short and fat they did not carry him very swiftly, and he spent some painful moments before he reached home.

After that François always regarded the three-

cornered hat with distrust, for, as he said years afterwards, "I was not of an age to understand a tenderness which showed itself by blows from hat."

This great-uncle died when François was only seven, but by that time the boy was learning his lessons at school, which he had entered with flying colours some months before.

François learned to read the Bible and Virgil Latin, and read them over and over again until he knew each word. But there was little time now to give to books, for he was old enough to help his father in the fields, and it was time he learnt to mow the grass, make hay, bind the sheaves, thresh at the winnow, plough and sow.

So the father and son worked together at the daily common tasks of the ordinary labourer, but they saw in their work things which few ordinary labourers see. They both loved everything that was beautiful either in form or colour, and nothing to them was commonplace.

One day they had stood together on the cliffs to watch the sunset, and the wonderful pageant of the crimson sky, and the golden glory of the shining sea made François exclaim with delight. But his father stood still and reverently bared his head. "My son, it is God," he said, and François never forgot those words.

It was not until some years afterwards that the boy began to try and draw pictures of the things he loved to look at, and it was the old engravings in the Bible that suggested the idea. He had little time for anything but the farm work, and he was quite content to do that thoroughly, to drive his furrows straight and clean, to work with a will in the field he loved. But at the noonday rest, when the other workers lay sleeping, he took his pencil and made careful drawings of all that he saw—the tall poplars round the grey church tower, and the bent forms of old men and women at their work.

So it was that Jean-François, the peasant, brought all the wealth of his heart, his love of God and of nature, to the making of Millet the painter, and it was from the heart of the peasant that the painter drew all that was best and most beautiful in his art.

Carry Your Sunshine.

A PLANT cannot thrive in the dark, neither can people. Carry cheer with you, and do not keep your sunshine for the warm flowery spots where a sunbeam more or less means nothing. Seek out the shadowy corners and carry your sunshine there.



TOMMY at school.
"How are you?"
"Very well."
"I suppose you are?"
"Oh no, I'm not a man in my

SIX-YEAR-OLD looking at his little voice come out of

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"Yes," s you know

SMILES



*"The happy smiles of the young
are the sunshine of the old"*



TOMMY, who was five years old, had just started at school. His aunt asked :

"How are you getting on at school, Tommy?"

"Very well," he answered. "I like school."

"I suppose you are the youngest in your class. Are you?"

"Oh no," said Tommy; "there's another gentleman in my class who comes in his pram."

SIX-YEAR-OLD Amy was ill in bed. Her mother, looking at her spotted face, said, "I believe this child has the chicken-pox." On hearing this, a trembling little voice from the bed asked, "Mother, will chickens come out of these spots?"

WHAT is the difference between an egg and a mare? One is an e-g-g, and the other is a she gee-gee.

JACKY, aged seven years, was fond of singing, but he did not trouble much about the words of his songs. He liked to sing about packing up his troubles in his old kit-bag, etc., especially as he had none. One day his mother heard him trying to sing lustily "What's the good of worrying?" but as he sang it, it was "What's the good dog worrying?"

"MOTHER, don't let Willie make me laugh so much; he is making me quite historical (hysterical)."

WILLIE is in the Preparatory School. He had been thinking earnestly of his future, and asked his father, "Dad, do I go on the classical or the commercial side of the school to be a good detective?"

"CAN'T you read that notice?" said the indignant innkeeper to the fisherman, pointing to the notice: "No fishing here."

"Yes, I can," was the reply; "but the man who put that up didn't know what he was talking about. I read it right enough, but thought I'd take my chance, and I've caught a dozen fish in twenty minutes!"

A FRENCHMAN was passing a big house, and a dog ran out barking at him. The Frenchman was frightened, but an Englishman called out, "It's all right; don't you know the rule—a barking dog never bites?"

"Yes," said the Frenchman, "I know ze rule, and you know ze rule, but does ze dog know the rule?"

Wild Flowers.

THE time is coming when we shall, during our country walks, find beautiful wild flowers in the fields and hedgerows. It is interesting to learn something about them and to know their simple names. One of the most handsome is the foxglove. It grows in England and Scotland, and is often five or six feet high. The flowers cluster round the stem, and are deep crimson near the base, paler towards the open end, and spotted with rich purple dots. There is little fear of foxgloves dying out where they have once appeared, for a single plant may shed no less than two million seeds. It flowers from late May till early August in woods, lanes, and rocky slopes.



The germander speedwell is perhaps one of the prettiest of all our wild flowers. You will find it on hedge-banks and woods during May and June. The leaves of this speedwell—for there are many varieties of the plant—grow on the stem in pairs without leaf-stalks. The flowers grow in clusters, in colour a most lovely blue. In Devonshire the country children call them "angels' eyes." Do not pick this exquisite flower when you see it, because in a very short time after you have done so half the blossom will have begun to fade. Leave it to live out its natural life on the plant.



"Spake full well, in language quaint and olden,
One who dwelleth by the castled Rhine,
When he called the flowers, so blue and golden,
Stars that in earth's firmament do shine."

Four Brave Deeds.

A Boy Hero of the Navy.

JOHN TRAVERS CORNWELL, the boy hero of the battle of Jutland, was wounded in the first few minutes of the action, yet he remained steady at his most exposed post, waiting for orders, though the mist of death was blotting out the terrible scene from his eyes. Still he "carried on." His superior



JOHN TRAVERS CORNWELL REMAINS STEADY
AT HIS POST.

officer wrote "that he stood waiting under heavy fire with nothing but his own brave heart and the love of God to cheer him." He died in hospital, quiet and cheerful to the end. The King bestowed upon him, for this brave deed, the Victoria Cross, the highest and proudest of all the war honours. *Faithful unto death.*

A Nameless Hero.

A SAILOR whose ship was torpedoed early in war says: "The best thing I saw was the comeliness of a little cadet. Not more than fourteen looked. He drifted near me—he and a seaman clinging with both their hands to the same bit of wood. I never saw anything so calm as that. He was talking to the seaman with him. 'We die we shall die game.' And with that he begins to talk about everyday things on the sunken ship. 'What's the new engineer like?' he says, and chatters about little incidents in the mess. Only fourteen—a little light-haired boy. I hope he was saved."

A Brave Girl.

GRACE HORSLEY DARLING, born in 1815 (say a year as the battle of Waterloo), was the daughter of the keeper of the Longstone Lighthouse, the Farne Islands. Her father, William Darling, frequently went out in the stormiest seas to save human life, and Grace must have seen rescued people brought to her home.

In the year 1838 the steamer *Forfarshire* was passing between the Farne Islands and the coast in a heavy storm, and was broken off amidships. The stern of the vessel sank, and the fore part was dashed on to a rock.

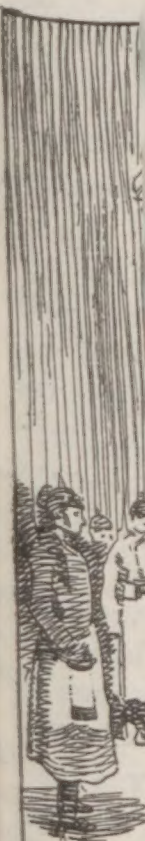
In the early dawn Grace and her father saw the wreck and some of the survivors clinging to the rocks. In those stormy seas it seemed impossible for a boat to reach them, yet the brave pair set out, and after great effort reached the spot where eight men and one woman were sending fervent prayers to heaven for blessings on their rescuers. All were saved, and the story of the heroic deed was told all over Europe. The Humane Society voted gold medals to William Darling and Grace, and all united to honour the brave girl.

Grace Darling's life was short. She died of consumption in 1842, but as long as the story of this noble deed can touch human hearts, men and women will keep her memory green.

A Heroic Nurse.

EDITH CAVELL, nurse and martyr, daughter of the Rev. F. Cavell, vicar of Swardston, Norfolk, was trained in a London hospital, and during the war became head of a hospital in Brussels. She continued her work while the Germans were

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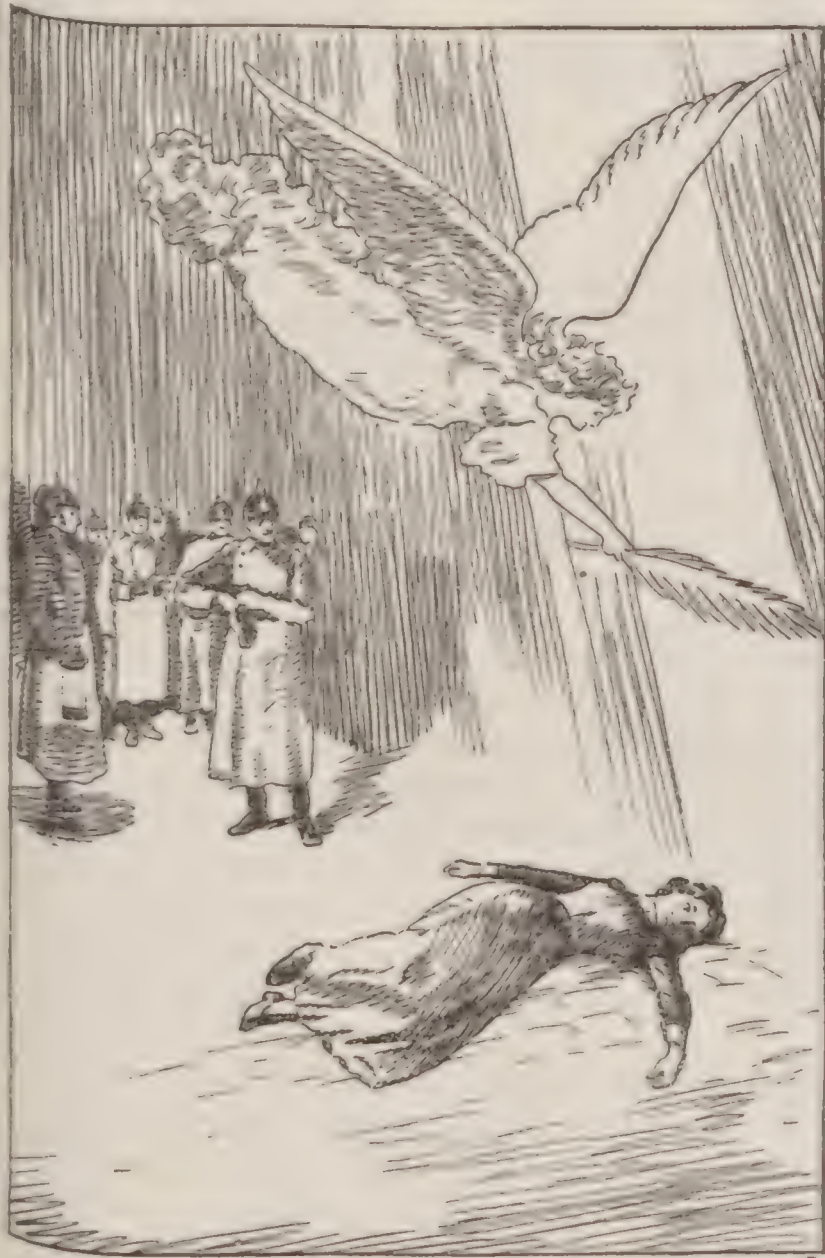
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occupation, and, with other friends, formed a society for helping stray Allied soldiers to escape into Holland. For this she was denounced as a spy, imprisoned, tried October 1915, found guilty, and, though the American Minister pleaded for her life to be spared, she was shot by the Germans. The



British chaplain who visited her on the eve of her execution found her calm and resigned. She told him she was glad to die for her country. In Trafalgar Square, London, a marble statue of this calm, brave heroine records for all time her unselfish devotion.

"CHILDREN'S PAPER" COMPETITION FORM. [April

Name.....

Address.....

..... Age last Birthday.....

Cut this out and attach it to any papers you may send in for Competition.

Bananas.

THE banana is of two kinds, the common and the dwarf, or the plantain and the banana. The small variety is considered the more valuable.

As soon as the fruit is ripe, the plant dies, and its place is taken by other plants growing up from the same root. In this way a clump of bananas will continue to furnish fruit year after year. They require very careful cultivation.

A banana plantation looks very much like a corn-field, being laid out in rows. All bananas are not yellow, however; there is a red kind much liked by some persons. In Mexico a small banana, scarcely larger than one's thumb, is grown. It has a thin skin, is unusually sweet, and is known as the "Chinese" banana.

When the fruit has reached its full size, and is still green and hard, the bunch is cut from the stem; and if intended to make a long sea-voyage on its way to market, is carefully wrapped in its own leaves, securely tied, and sent off.

The gentle rustle of the long delicate leaves of the banana as the wind sways them is a very soothing sound. In Honolulu nearly every house has its clump of bananas, and here the rustle is very pleasing. Uncultivated bananas grow near tiny streams of fresh water. Their fruit is rather small.

Most of the bananas which you see sold come from the British island of Jamaica. Jamaica is full of banana plants. They cover the hills; they line each dip and dell; they follow the highways right across the island.

Francis Drake tasted the banana when he visited the West Indies. He said it is a fruit that "when it waxeth ripe the meat which filleth the rind becometh yellow, and is exceedingly sweet and pleasant." I am sure that you agree with Francis Drake.

Every year Jamaica sends us bananas to the value of over a million of money.

Golden Text for April.

I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.—PHILIPPIANS IV. 13.

Motto for April.

*"Use well the moments as they fly,
Learn well to live and well to die."*



CHAPTER I.

AVRIL GETS A SURPRISE.

WHEN the train stopped at Reading, Avril was almost asleep. At least she seemed to be, but really what she felt was a pleasant dreaminess in which school and holidays, home and Mayfield, were all happily jumbled up together, while hedges and telegraph poles, horses, cows, sheep, and houses, went whirling along outside the window. Her father, in the opposite corner, was really sleeping, for he had had a long day in the City before he had met her to take her to Mayfield. There was no one else in the carriage.

When the train stopped, however, she was wide awake at once. Several people were getting in, and at last two of them came straight to that very compartment. They were a tall lady and a very small boy, and they had two or three parcels. They made quite a bustle when they got in; but her father still slept, and in a moment or two the train started again and the new passengers had settled down. The lady had taken the farthest corner, and was looking out through the window; but the boy had settled himself in the middle of Avril's seat. Strangely enough, he was nearer to her than he was to the lady who had brought him.

Avril was a little surprised, and at once began to think. "It can't be his mother," she decided, "or else she has been scolding him. I wonder which." And wondering, she looked first at the lady, and felt that it would be very difficult to like her. That tall form seemed to be all corners, and the face was hard and resolute and—yes, and cruel. A softer word would not do.

Then she looked carefully at the boy, and her feelings were altogether different. He was a boy of seven or so, with fair hair and blue eyes, quite nicely dressed, but with something about him that was very wrong. That was his look, which

was not to be mistaken by any one with two eyes to see with. It was a look of sadness, mingled with fear.

"Oh!" she said to herself in surprise.

She watched him for nearly a minute, while the train ran on through the green country in the summer evening. No, there was no mistake about that look. The boy was afraid. And then, of course, her heart began to speak, and her look became kinder and kinder.

Once there had been a baby boy in Avril's home, but he had gone away long ago, and no one had ever taken his place. All the same she always thought of him as her boy brother and playfellow, growing up side by side with her. She alone knew how often they played together when she seemed to be quite by herself in the garden, and how often she sat and told him the fairy tales she loved so well. But behind all this fancy was a great longing which only her mother fully guessed—a longing to see little Eric again and to have him back.

So she sat and looked and thought, while the boy sat and looked straight in front of him, as if he feared to stir. But then Avril suddenly leaned over towards him and spoke in a low whisper:

"Would you like to stand by this window and look out?"

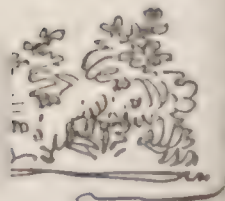
He was greatly surprised. He glanced first at the woman, but she had not heard; then he looked at Avril, and there was something in her brown eyes that seemed to hold his gaze. She held out her hand, and that movement gave him courage. Slipping down from the seat, he came to her and stood at the door looking out; and then she said, in her gentlest whisper:

"What is the matter?"

The thing that happened afterwards was very surprising, but when Avril looks at you in a certain way you can do nothing but trust her. Now the boy looked at her, timidly, sideways—

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but a long look, full of questioning and doubt and fear. Then he said, in the same secret whisper, but as clearly as possible:

"She is an ogre-ess!"

Avril, of course, was amazed. At first she thought she had made a mistake—that she could not really have heard that strange saying. But the boy, seeing her astonishment, nodded, and said it again:

"She is an ogre-ess, and she is going to kill me."

There was no doubt about it this time. He had said it, and she had really heard it. Had it been said in fun? One look at that poor little face was quite enough answer to that question. If ever a boy was in earnest, this small boy was. But Avril had no time to ask more, for suddenly a voice spoke behind them:

"Harold! Come here."

Harold started. He did not even glance at Avril again, but turned at once to the one who had called him. And the same voice said coldly:

"Sit in that corner."

He did not move after that, and Avril was almost afraid to look at him. But during the remaining five minutes of the journey to Hockminster she was busy with crowding thoughts. Her heart went out to this Harold, and went to stay. Were there any ogres and ogresses in this part of the world? She had never heard of any in Essex, but Berkshire was another

county, and perhaps—— And then she tried to remember her best ogre story.

A certain Prince of long ago had gone riding in a great forest. Presently he had met a very smiling and beautiful lady, who had invited him to visit her Castle. When they reached the Castle the beautiful lady had gone in first, and the poor Prince, waiting outside, had heard her talking with her children within.

"Mother," they said, "what have you brought us for dinner? we are so frightfully hungry." "Be patient, dear children," she had replied; "you shall have a good big feast now, for I have brought you a young and tender Prince." So, of course, the poor Prince, hearing that terrible conversation, had ridden off for his life, and only just in time.

Well, this woman did not smile at all, though perhaps she could do so if she pleased. . . . But at that point Avril's thoughts were scattered, for the train ran into the station of Hockminster.

The woman quickly began to gather her parcels together, and Mr. Hayes woke up.

"Ah! here we are," he said wearily. "Come along, Avril."

After that, of course, all was bustle, and in that bustle Avril lost sight of the Ogress and Harold, and for the time even forgot all about them. Her father seized her hand, and they



hurried together over a foot-bridge, and so to another platform and out of the station. There, at the entrance, they found Uncle Horace waiting for them with the trap, and after a long, sleepy, delicious drive through the roads and lanes, they saw the scattered houses of Mayfield in the dusk.

Then came the lighted door of Homelands, surrounded by its fragrant gardens, and Aunt Hilda's rosy face and welcoming arms, and a white tablecloth laid for supper in the long dining-room. And big Uncle Horace was saying in his jolly way :

"Here they are, Hilda. Avril has been frightened away from the East Coast by Zeppelins, and is come to look for shelter with us."

"Not at all," said Avril gravely. "I abhor the Zeppelins, uncle, but I'm not a bit afraid of them. One of them dropped a bomb into Mr. Bannister's house, right opposite ours, and papa and another man had to catch little baby Bannister in a sheet when he was thrown out of the window to save his life. But I wasn't a bit afraid, and I only came away to oblige mother—and, of course, to see you and auntie."

Then Uncle Horace laughed, and Mr. Hayes began to tell them all about the Zeppelins and the bomb at Mr. Bannister's; but before that was told Avril was so sleepy that she could not keep her eyes open. So she said good-night, and Aunt Hilda took her upstairs; and the last thing she noticed was the softness of the sheets in the cosy little bed. Directly after she had noticed it she seemed to glide away into a sleep that was real and deep and dreamless, and that lasted all through the still summer night.

When she awoke at last it was because she had been called; but the person who called her was not Aunt Hilda, nor Uncle Horace, nor her father, who was to get up early to go back to his day's work in the City. It was somebody outside the house, in the big poultry yard where Uncle Horace spent so much of his time; and the call came in a strange, long, shrill, joyous crow :

"Avril-l-l-l!"

"Good gracious!" she said. "It's the cocks crowing, and I thought they were calling me!"

Then she was really awake, and remembered everything. She brushed back the brown hair from her eyes, and sat up, and clasped her hands together with a joyous cry :

"It's holidays—and it's Homelands! Oh joy!"

Fifteen minutes later she was downstairs and then only just in time. Her father and Uncle Horace had finished their quick breakfast and were just getting ready for the drive to Hockminster to catch the early train. When they went out to the trap Avril had her father tightly by the arm, whispering messages for the little mother at home; but almost the last thing said was not a message but a question. It was such a curious one that Mr. Hayes had to hear it twice before he understood :

"Are there any Ogres and Ogresses in Berkshire, papa?"

She was quite in earnest, and if he had looked more carefully he would have seen a shadow in her eyes. It was the shadow of what had happened yesterday. But Mr. Hayes did not see the shadow, and could hardly suppose that she was really in earnest. He thought it was all part of the story-world in which they had often taken long journeys together. So he bent down and answered in the story-book way :

"I shouldn't wonder; it is full of queer old places. Just keep your eyes open, Avril; and if you meet an Ogre, be sure to tell me all about it."

And in two minutes more he was gone.

CHAPTER II.

AVRIL MAKES DISCOVERIES.

MAYFIELD was quite a small village, and Uncle Horace had only been living there a short time. He kept poultry, and two cows and a horse and trap, with many other things which were quite delightful. Other people at Mayfield kept poultry too, but it was said that he was quite the cleverest of them all. He told Avril once that all his hens laid ducks' eggs, but she saw the twinkle in his eye when he said it, and knew that it was a joke. That was just Uncle Horace's way—he would say the most absurd things so gravely that you would certainly have believed them but for the twinkle in his eye. For the first three days Avril had so much to see that life was full of excitement for her. She spent all her time in the field or the poultry yard

learning the names of all the creatures there and making friends with them. She would have done the same on the fourth day too, but during breakfast Uncle Horace advised her to make a change.

"You haven't even seen the village yet," he said. "Go down as far as the cross-roads, and then come back. It will be a very nice walk for you."

"Shall I meet with any adventures?" she asked quickly.

"Adventures? Giants and so on, do you mean? Well, there is one giant down that way, but he won't hurt you. He is quite harmless to little girls."

Avril saw the twinkle again, and felt obliged to scold him. "Uncle Horace," she said, "you are very full of mischief and teasing. I abhor teasing. Now, if I were a fairy princess, do you know what I would do with you? I would turn you into an elf."

"A what?" cried Uncle Horace.

"An elf. It is about as big as a little finger, but full of mischief and teasing. And when you were an elf I should be very strict indeed with you."

Then Uncle Horace sat back in his chair and laughed. He was a very big man, and was so amused to fancy himself as an elf that his eyes twinkled all day long at the thought. However, Avril took his advice and went down to the village.

As she tripped down the road she began to think, and, of course, her thoughts followed the path Uncle Horace had opened for her. Adventures? Yes, she might have a real adventure to-day, for it was a still summer morning, with all the country full of sunshine. What had her uncle meant by talking about a giant? Well, perhaps she would soon see. Certainly, if there was a giant in Mayfield she wouldn't fail to find him. Besides, hadn't her father said that there might be ogres in Berkshire? Then that boy Harold, whom she had met in the train—he had been very positive about that woman.

Then she came to the first house on the road, and her thoughts took another turn. It was a very pretty cottage, with clean windows, and white curtains, and a green gate, and a garden all round. In the window was a card which bore the notice:—

MRS. BROWN

TEAS

MILK AND NEW LAID EGGS

"This is very nice," said Avril, standing opposite the gate to see it all. "It is quite a story-book cottage. Why, it might be the very cottage that Jack the Giant-killer lived in with his mother, when they had only one cow and he had to go and sell it."



Then she heard footsteps, and two people came round the side of the cottage towards the gate. And, sure enough, one of them was an elderly woman with a kind face and grey hair, while the other was a fine young man, smartly dressed in khaki. At first they did not notice Avril.

"Take care of yourself, my boy," said the woman, as the young soldier kissed her. "And come to see me again as soon as you get leave."

(To be continued.)

Bible Story.

Queen Esther.—I.

THERE was a great stir in the palace of Shushan, the beautiful palace which King Darius, the friend and master of Daniel, had built. King Darius was dead now, and Ahasuerus sat upon the throne of Babylon; and he had just chosen for his queen Esther, the Jewish maiden, one who belonged to that race of people who had been carried away captive from Jerusalem.

It was little wonder that Ahasuerus had chosen



her as his queen, for there was no other maiden in all the land as beautiful as she was; and he was one of those selfish, greedy kings who want everything that pleases their eyes. And Esther's beauty pleased Ahasuerus more than all the riches and treasures he possessed. He did not know she was a Jewess—it would not have troubled him if he had known; but Mordecai, her kinsman, had bade her keep that a secret.

It was Mordecai who had brought up the little orphan Jewish girl, and she obeyed him as if he were her father. His heart was filled with joy to think that Esther had been chosen to be queen, for he hoped that some day she might be able to help her poor people, and speak a good word for them to the king.

But before that time came he and Esther between them were able to do the king himself a great service, and this was how it happened.

Mordecai, who held an important post in the court, spent a good deal of his time in what was called the king's gate, a beautiful hall outside the palace, where men waited to have an audience with the king.

It was while waiting there one day that he discovered that a plot was on foot to kill the king, and he immediately sent secretly and told Esther. She, of course, took the news to the king; and it was so quickly done that the plotters were seized at once and put to death, and the king's life was saved. No one thought of rewarding Mordecai, and it was all soon forgotten. But the account was written down in the king's book just as it happened.

Soon after this trouble began to gather round Mordecai. The king had put a man called Haman at the head of all the princes of the palace, to be obeyed as if he were the king himself. All the servants and officers of the court bowed before him as he swept proudly through the waiting throne at the king's gate—all except one old man, the Jew Mordecai.

It was not pride which made Mordecai refuse to bow his head to Haman. It was quite a different reason. To bow to a heathen ruler was considered just the same as bowing to the god whom he represented; and Mordecai, who loved and obeyed the true God, would do no reverence to any other. He knew it was dangerous to refuse; but, like Daniel, he was not afraid to show that he served God. People whispered as they watched him, and the whispers grew louder and louder, until they reached the ears of Haman and made him furiously angry.

Day by day the same thing happened, and as Haman saw that upright figure and unbowed head, he hated Mordecai more and more. What was the use of all his state and power as long as that unbending figure stood in his way?

So Haman thought, and he planned a terrible vengeance. The punishment should fall not only on Mordecai, but upon all his people too. The Jews in every part of the country should be swept out of existence. It would be necessary, of course, to work with great cunning; but, after all, the selfish king was easily managed.

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These strange people, the Jews, who are scat-
tered about all thy kingdom, are always giving
trouble," he said to Ahasuerus one day. "They
have different laws, and refuse to keep the king's
law. If it please the king, let it be written that they
may be destroyed."

Then he went on to offer to pay a large sum of
money if he were allowed to carry out the plan.
But the king needed no bribe—he was more than
willing to grant such a request; and he at once gave
his signet ring to Haman, that he might seal the
letters that ordered all Jews to be killed.

With a joyful heart Haman set to work at once to
write out the letters and fix the day of the massacre,

and messengers were sent out to carry the orders
into every land.

It was a terrible vengeance, and Mordecai was
troubled beyond words. There was but one thing
to do: Esther must be told, and she must try to
save her people. She must not think of herself.
God had given her power, and the time had come
when she must use it for His people.

It was no easy thing for Esther to do. No one
dared to go in and speak to the king without special
permission. Any one who went uninvited might be
put to death. It was only if the king should hold
out his golden sceptre in token of forgiveness that
the intruder would be allowed to live.

LETTER FROM THE EDITRESS.

MY DEAR READERS,—This number of *The Children's Paper* will, I hope,
be a pleasant surprise for you—a surprise which I have been preparing
for you for some time. Since last month the paper has not only grown in size,
but it has also grown some new features, and it is wearing a new dress. It is an
old friend in a new form. Most of you have among your companions one who is
your special friend, and, if you have chosen wisely, the longer you know each
other the stronger your affection and real friendship become. Now *The Children's
Paper*, your old friend, hopes to show new qualities which will link you with it
more and more.

First of all, I wish to know you better. I should like you to write to me, and
tell me what subjects you are interested in and what you would like me to write
about. Tell me the subjects about which you want more information, and I will,
as far as possible, furnish you with it. Also, if you have an interesting story to
tell, an unusual experience, or a good joke to relate, send it to me with your name
and address, and I will, if it suits our paper, have it printed. Then you will feel
that this is "Our" paper—yours and mine—and that you are a contributor
to it.

A new serial story commences this month, interesting both for boys and girls;
there is also a short story chosen with the same purpose in view; there is work for
busy fingers in leisure hours, and true stories of brave and thrilling deeds.

The Competitions have now commenced again, and from time to time the por-
traits of the prize-winners will appear in these pages.

The first part of the beautiful story of Queen Esther will, I hope, be a joy and
help to you.

Hoping to hear from you, and I will answer your letters.—I am, your
friend,

THE EDITRESS.

Our Competitions.

Rules for Competitors.

COMPETITORS *must* attend to the following rules:—

1. Subject to the age limits, you may enter for any or all of the competitions, but you must attach to your answers one Competition Form cut from the current number of the paper. The Competition Form will be found on page 9. No answers will be considered unless accompanied by this Competition Form. It must be filled up as directed.

2. A Competition Form *must be attached to one of the papers sent in by each competitor.* Other competitions entered must have the name, address, and age of the sender written distinctly upon them.

3. Care should be taken with *writing and neatness*, as these will be taken into consideration in judging all competitions.

4. Address your answers to "Editress," *Children's Paper*, c/o Thomas Nelson and Sons, Ltd., Parkside Works, Edinburgh.

5. No answers received later than April 15 will be considered.

[We rely upon you to send in your own unaided work.]

Competitions for April.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

Competitors must put their full postal address on each competition, and must put a sufficient amount of stamps on their packets before posting; but are requested NOT TO ENCLOSE stamps for replies, as these can in no case be sent.

In each Competition the Editress offers two prizes.

For all Ages up to Sixteen.

ESSAY COMPETITION.

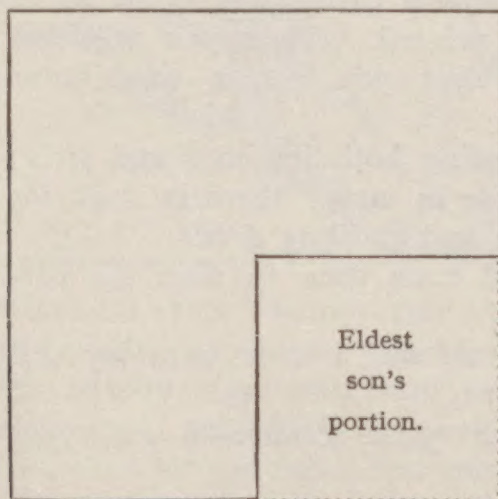
Write three verses of poetry on "The Sea," four lines in each verse.

DRAWING AND COLOURING COMPETITION (A).

Draw three daffodils, and colour them either with water colours or chalks.

PUZZLE.

A man left a square piece of land to be divided among his five sons. The eldest son was to take a square piece from one corner, thus—



The remaining three-quarters was to be divided quite equally among the other four sons, so that each one's share was the same size and the same shape. How was this done?

SCRIPTURE KNOWLEDGE COMPETITION (A).

Write a life of the disciple whom Jesus loved. (Not to exceed 200 words.)

For Children under Twelve only.

COMPOSITION COMPETITION.

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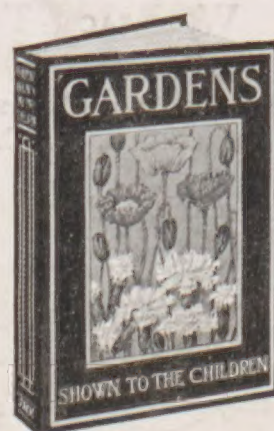
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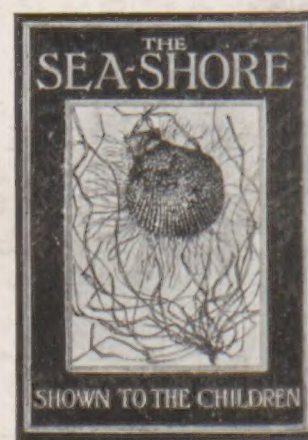
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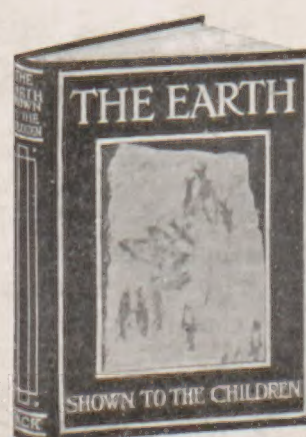
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